

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 15 MARCH 2016

Present: Councillor Mrs Ring (Chairman), and
Councillors Mrs Blackmore, English, Mrs Joy, Newton,
Perry, Mrs Ring, Webb and Webster

138. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors D Mortimer, Mrs Parvin, Mrs Robertson and J A Wilson.

139. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Mrs Blackmore was substituting for Councillor J A Wilson, Councillor Mrs Joy was substituting for Councillor D Mortimer, Councillor English was substituting for Councillor Mrs Robertson.

140. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

141. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

142. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

143. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

144. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the items in Part I of the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

145. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY 2016

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed.

146. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

147. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY)

There were no questions from members of the public.

148. REFERENCE FROM COUNCIL - HOUSING CRISIS - WHERE ARE THE YOUNG GOING TO LIVE?

Members considered the Reference from Council in regard to 'Housing Crisis – Where are the young going to live?'.

Members discussed the merits of meeting with the interested parties on an informal basis to address their particular issues of concern. It was agreed that it would take place during the last week of March.

RESOLVED: That the Committee meet with the various organisations represented at the Council meeting on an informal basis before the April Committee meeting when Officers will then bring a follow up report.

Voting: For: 8 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

149. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES - REVIEW AND UPDATE OF CONTAMINATED LAND INSPECTION STRATEGY

Members considered the report of the Head of Housing and Community Services which related to the review and update of the contaminated land inspection strategy.

It was noted that due to changes in statutory guidance the strategy required revision. The strategy identified how the Council would progress its statutory duty.

RESOLVED: That the updated Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy attached as Appendix A to the report of the Head of Housing and Community Services be adopted with effect from 1 April 2016.

Voting: For: 8 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

150. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC REALM - REVIEW OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

Members considered the report of the Head of Environment and Public Realm regarding the Review of Public Conveniences.

It was noted that the current cost of the provision of public toilets was just over £210,000 per annum. £130,000 of this sum was recharged to other departments, predominantly for the cleaning and maintenance of toilets in the Borough.

Members were appraised that the Riverside area had been identified as an area for investment within the town as part of a 5 year plan. This would include redeveloping the toilets at Fairmeadow. Various options were

being investigated to assist with the investment, including securing Section 106 contributions.

Officers advised that they would be approaching more businesses outside of the town to join the Community Toilet Scheme to enable more areas to be covered around the borough, such as Parkwood Shops.

In response to Members questions, Officers advised:-

- That the paid toilet are expensive to run and are prone to vandalism
- Officers would be approaching businesses in the town centre who stay open late into the night to join the Scheme
- Officers would look at sponsorship for the toilets possibly through the One Maidstone route
- The Parkwood toilet would be closed but as already stated businesses in Parkwood would be approached to join the Scheme.

Councillor English proposed and Councillor Webb seconded that Recommendation 6 be amended to read:-

“That the Committee supports the proposal to explore investment opportunities for new facilities as part of the implementation of a modest Business Improvement District and in order to facilitate the possible funds from planning obligations prepare a business case in line with the parameters outlined in Recommendation 1”.

Voting: For: 2 Against: 2 Abstentions: 4

Motion Lost.

Councillor Mrs Blackmore proposed and Councillor Perry seconded that Recommendation 6 be amended to read:-

“That the Committee supports the proposal to explore investment opportunities for new facilities as part of the implementation of a modest Business Improvement District and through the collection of Section 106 contributions”.

Voting: For 8 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

Motion Carried.

The Committee then voted on the recommendations as amended.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Committee approves the objective that the provision of public conveniences should support the Council’s ambition for

Maidstone to be an attractive place for visitors and residents, and therefore should focus on areas where provision is currently insufficient;

- (2) That the Committee agrees to the removal of the Butterfly Urinal from Maidstone High Street;
- (3) That the Committee agrees that the principle of the Community Toilet Scheme should be refreshed and reviewed;
- (4) That the Committee delegates to the Head of Environment and Public Realm in conjunction with the Head of Commercial and Economic Development the authority to agree new Community Toilet arrangements with businesses in the Town Centre which have suitable facilities;
- (5) That the Committee agrees to continue the current payments to support the Parish Councils' service provision until it can be considered as part of the review of the Parish Services Scheme; and
- (6) That the Committee supports the proposal to explore investment opportunities for new facilities as part of the implementation of a modest Business Improvement District and through the collection of Section 106 contributions.

Voting: For: 8 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

151. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because of the likely disclosure of exempt information for the reason specified, having applied the public interest test:-

**Head of Schedule 12 A and
Brief Description**

Minutes (Part II) of the meeting held on 15 March 2016

Paragraph 3 – Information re financial/business affairs

152. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES - GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITES FREEHOLD TRANSFER

Members considered the exempt report of the Head of Housing and Community Services which set out the rationale for transferring the ownership of two Gypsy and Traveller sites to Kent County Council.

RESOLVED: That the freehold transfer of Gypsy and Traveller Sites to Kent County Council (KCC), as detailed in the exempt report of the Head of Housing and Community Services, be approved.

Voting: For: 8 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

153. DURATION OF MEETING

7.10 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.